

① Soc 14-1

UNCLASSIFIED

Argentine Prisoner Releases

1/17/78
ECA 2. Port
Buenos Aires
(FYI)

Argentine President Videla, in his talk with you and, subsequently in his discussions with the Secretary in Buenos Aires, left the clear impression that Christmas would bring good human rights news.

BI 023

In mid-December the bizarre kidnapping of 13 persons from a church put a damper on these hopes. The government could not explain the disappearances, which we viewed as further evidence of Videla's inability to control the various security forces.

Now, we have some encouraging news. Around Christmas the government announced 389 releases from executive custody, but the past record left us in doubt about how many would actually be freed. We have now learned from church and human rights sources in Argentina that at least 300 are at liberty. (This leaves perhaps 3,600 executive prisoners, though we view all figures on disappearances and prisoners with caution because of the difficulty in obtaining accurate information.) We are surprised that the Argentine Government has not advertised these releases more effectively, but perhaps it has opted for quiet actions rather than communiques.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date ☐ Declassify on Reason

1/17/78

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This item or something like it went to the President on Jan 17 - "Night Reading" Fred

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